United Nations S/PV.6154 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6154th meeting

Tuesday, 30 June 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. İlkin	(Turkey)
Members:	Austria	Mrs. Nguyen
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Koudougou
	China	Mr. Pan Jingyu
	Costa Rica	Ms. Zamora
	Croatia	Mr. Galli
	France	Mr. Guidée
	Japan	Mr. Kumagai
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Gebreel
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Uganda	Mr. Kamahungye
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. Germain
	Viet Nam	Mr. Bui The Giang

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2009/323)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

09-38734 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. De Klerk (Netherlands): I thank you, Sir, for allowing the Netherlands to take the floor at this important debate on the situation in Afghanistan. We fully align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic.

Before offering a few remarks regarding the future, allow me to express the gratitude of the Dutch Government for the exemplary leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Eide in the run-up to and during the International Conference on Afghanistan in The Hague earlier this year. We are also grateful for the overwhelming support and constructive attitude of the approximately 100 delegations that attended the Conference.

Regarding the future, the Netherlands would like to make a few observations. First, on the upcoming elections, many speakers around the table have rightfully emphasized the importance of fair elections and, in this regard, the need to ensure a level playing field for all candidates. But let us not forget that these are the first elections organized by the Afghan authorities themselves, and that is no small development. It is an important sign that the spirit of democracy is gradually finding its place in Afghan society, and we congratulate the Afghan people on this.

Secondly, it is time for the international community, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), to start thinking of the period after the elections. We believe that there is merit in discussing some sort of agreement between the international community and the new Afghan Government, following the formation of such a Government. That will enable both sides to express their expectations towards each other.

From our side, we would wish to focus on the areas of good governance and human rights, values which are cherished not only by the international community, but also and more importantly by the Afghan population. In particular, more emphasis on clear targets in the area of the rule of law will help to establish the credibility of a new Government that will be trusted by the people of Afghanistan.

A third issue relates to what is sometimes referred to as the civilian and military surges which are under way and which we believe are necessary, particularly given the volatile security situation. We attach particular importance to the growing consensus regarding the importance of civilian assistance. In that regard, we share the view of others that international civilian efforts should be geared towards supporting and consolidating Afghan civilian capabilities, in line with the priorities identified by the Afghan authorities themselves. Pooling international civilian assistance capabilities would increase the efficiency of aid efforts and reduce the risk of duplication or, even worse, miscommunications between donors and the Afghan authorities.

This brings me to a fourth and final observation — the Dutch experience in Afghanistan. We say this with modesty because we fully realize that situations in different provinces have been and are different. Nevertheless, we feel a few developments are noteworthy. First, the civilian footprint of the Dutch-led multilateral provincial reconstruction team in Uruzgan is growing. In fact, the team operates under civilian leadership. We feel that investments in civilian-military cooperation are paying off. UNAMA opened an office in May, and we feel that this is very useful. Moreover, the presence in Uruzgan of civilian actors has risen to 50 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and companies, as opposed to 6 NGOs in Uruzgan just three years ago. At the same time, Afghan authorities have increased their security and military presence in Uruzgan, and we expect this trend to continue.

Secondly, the civilian capacities of the Afghan authorities in Uruzgan are growing. We used to liaise mainly with the Governor, but these days we are linking our activities more and more to the executive branches of line ministries in Uruzgan and thereby strengthening the institutional structures and policies of the Afghan Government.

Thirdly, all those developments, both on the civilian and on the military side, are contributing to strengthening the zone of stability and development in Uruzgan, and this will help us and our international partners to gradually shift towards a more national and a less single-province-oriented approach.

We share Special Representative Eide's view that such a shift will help reduce the current level of aid

fragmentation in Afghanistan. This is what we are trying to do already; of our assistance for Afghanistan of approximately €200 million since 2006, about one third is spent directly in Uruzgan, in full transparency towards the central authorities in Kabul and UNAMA, while about two thirds are spent through multilateral channels in support of the central Government.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): Let me first thank the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2009/323) and Mr. Kai Eide for his refreshingly frank and honest remarks. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend all the women and men of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their tireless efforts, and the Government and people of Afghanistan for their unyielding commitment to building a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Norway shares this commitment, and we remain fully dedicated to doing our part financially, militarily and politically. It was with great interest, therefore, that we read the Secretary-General's report, in which a mixed picture of progress, challenges and setbacks is painted.

In terms of progress, we are encouraged by the positive developments of the past few months: the expanded role of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, the advancement in designated priority areas, such as agriculture, as well as the gradual alignment and improved coordination of international contributions. We are also pleased to note that the preparations for the upcoming elections continue and have been carried out without any serious incident so far.

We further welcome the observations on the emergence of three interlinked strategic shifts in Afghanistan: increased emphasis on civilian efforts, focus on subnational governance and service-delivery, and alignment of international efforts, that is, the aid effectiveness agenda. These issues have been high on the Norwegian agenda for some time, and we should all join forces in further promoting these positive developments, which are of great importance in improving the overall situation in Afghanistan.

At the same time, we note with concern some alarming setbacks during the same period, in particular the deterioration of the security situation in some areas of the country and the increase in civilian casualties compared to the same months of 2008. In the light of the political progress achieved on the ground and with a view to the elections in August, it is crucial to ensure that military activity — now expected to increase over the summer — does not serve to alienate the Afghan population from the international community.

Let me turn the Council's attention to a question of increasing importance — that of a regional approach to the stabilization of Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan is a challenge to all countries in the region. It is therefore paramount that all of Afghanistan's neighbours, as well as other major countries, be engaged in a constructive political dialogue and partnership in order to combat organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, and to promote trade, cooperation and the general integration of Afghanistan into the region.

Allow me also briefly to comment on the question of funding for UNAMA. Last year's increase in the Mission's budget was significant and important, yet in recent months we have seen the demand for UNAMA's services grow faster than the increase in resources. Grown, too, have the expectations to deliver, both from within Afghanistan and from outside the country. This points to a deeper question in need of deliberation — if UNAMA succeeds in its role as an enabler for political stability and development, then how far would we, as donors, be willing to stretch in order to maximize the Mission's impact? I will limit myself to saying that Norway stands ready to engage constructively with the Council and the international community on the matter.

The President: I give the floor to the new Permanent Representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): Mr. President, as others have noted, this is your last time in the Security Council. As it is my first, I want to thank you for your very able stewardship of the Council in June and wish you the best as you come to the end of your time in New York. There could, I would suggest, be few more distinguished ways to spend your last day in this place than to preside over the Council. I am also very mindful that our two countries share a very special bond, best epitomized by the memorial to Kemal Atatürk that stands looking over the harbour of my capital city.

I also thank the Secretary-General for his quarterly report (S/2009/323) on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the

Special Representative for his incisive comments, and the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his very constructive response.

New Zealand is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this debate. Ours is a small nation of 4 million people a long way from Afghanistan, but it has made a long-standing commitment to that country. We seek an Afghanistan that is sustainable as an independent nation, free from the scourges of subversion and terrorism.

Despite the security challenges that we face elsewhere, particularly in our own Pacific neighbourhood, we lead the provincial reconstruction team in Bamyan province. New Zealand personnel support the International Security Assistance Force headquarters and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and provide police training and mentoring in Bamyan.

New Zealand contributes to other priority areas of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, such as rural livelihood programmes, education and health services, and the capacity-development of provincial governmental, non-governmental and civil society organizations. We welcome the new national agriculture strategy and plan to increase our support to improve agricultural productivity and related research. New Zealand also welcomes the increased emphasis on civilian contributions to Afghanistan and more effective coordination of the international community's efforts, as expressed during The Hague Conference in March. UNAMA will play a key role in those areas.

New Zealand agrees that there is a need for a clear strategy for engagement in Afghanistan that achieves the right balance between stability and security, on the one hand, and development and diplomacy on the other. Effective implementation of that strategy is vital. Coordination of international contributions supporting the Government of Afghanistan is critical, and Afghanistan's neighbours also have an important role to play in this regard, as has already been noted. New Zealand is encouraged by the Secretary-General's reports of recent progress on such regional cooperation.

New Zealand is concerned about increasing levels of violence in Afghanistan in the lead-up to the elections. As has been made clear, Afghanistan continues to face deep-seated problems with governance, human rights, development, justice and narcotics. The security situation, especially in the South and the East, seriously hampers development and limits the reach of the Afghan Government and its ability to improve the lives of all Afghans. All this makes strengthening Afghan military and police capability a key commitment for the international community, because development in Afghanistan needs to be underpinned by sound, credible and effective Government.

New Zealand also welcomes the progress towards elections to be held on 20 August and is encouraged to see a greater number of women candidates than in the previous election. We also welcome the additional security to help enable the Afghan people to express their democratic rights at the polls without fear of violence, and we are providing NZ$500,000 to support the elections.

While we welcome the progress in Afghanistan in recent years, we believe that a continued, sustained commitment of the international community will remain necessary to help Afghanistan build a positive future, and New Zealand is committed to playing its part in achieving that future.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Amil (Pakistan): I would like at the outset to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful and eventful presidency of the Security Council and on your able guidance and stewardship of the Council's work this month. As you are a dear friend of the people of Pakistan, and since you are coming to the end of a brilliant career, our delegation should like particularly to wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

This timely debate is testimony to the continued attention of the international community and the Security Council to Afghanistan. We are also thankful to Mr. Kai Eide for his informative briefing this morning. Pakistan appreciates the important role of the United Nation in Afghanistan.

The latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/323) presents an objective analysis of the situation in Afghanistan. While Afghanistan has made progress on certain frontiers, considerable challenges remain on the political, security, governance, humanitarian and development fronts. The overall deterioration of the security situation is a matter of concern. Development and reconstruction efforts are slow and uneven. The absence of State authority

beyond some major cities, a lack of good governance, rampant corruption and economic hardships are shattering the people's confidence in the ability of the Government to provide protection and better conditions of life. An increase in civilian casualties is further fuelling public grievances against foreign forces. This has been a major impediment to winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people, which is necessary for success in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is standing at the crossroads of history. The challenges facing Afghanistan are numerous and daunting. For decades, Afghanistan has suffered the ravages of war and civil strife. The brotherly people of Afghanistan have been the victims of instability, violence, terrorism, factional fighting, illegal arms, narcotics production and trafficking, and organized crime. This has had a disastrous effect on the Afghan economy, infrastructure and society. The time has arrived to put an end to this vicious cycle, but there is no magic wand to turn the devastation of decades into development overnight.

The absence of a comprehensive strategy has prevented us from gaining any significant headway in the consolidation of peace and achieving stability in Afghanistan. We must move from the fragmented and piecemeal approach to tackle these formidable challenges and mount an integrated response fully owned and led by the Afghan people, with the support of the international community.

Partnerships with regional States, as well as the international community, will remain key to sustainable peace and development in Afghanistan. A series of recent international and transregional meetings indicates the dedication and commitment of regional and international partners to the development of Afghanistan. The abundance of international attention and goodwill towards Afghanistan is a good opportunity to galvanize our efforts and evolve a new consensus on achieving a comprehensive strategy for peace in Afghanistan and the region. Based on cooperation and shared responsibility, such a consensus should address the past and present shortcomings and set a clear strategic direction for the international efforts in Afghanistan.

In this regard, let me briefly mention some aspects which would require particular attention.

First, the challenges faced by Afghanistan are of internal origin and therefore require internal solutions. Any comprehensive strategy devised to address these challenges must enjoy the full ownership of the Afghan people and the continued support of the international community, particularly the neighbouring countries.

Secondly, the use of military force alone cannot deliver. The resultant civilian casualties have been a major cause of alienation. It would be worthwhile to focus less on military operations and to devote more energy to protecting populations and securing areas.

Thirdly, a civilian development surge is needed. Massive investment is required in reconstruction, development and social welfare programmes, improving governance and putting a premium on the strengthening of State institutions and capacity-building. Providing better living conditions and making peace dividends visible would greatly help to win the support of the Afghan people.

Fourthly, we must not deal with the problems of terrorism and violent extremism in isolation; they are part of a wider issue and should be tackled accordingly. The rise in militancy in Afghanistan is directly linked to the unchecked growth of narcotics there. Financial resources generated through illicit trade in drugs have helped sustain the activities of insurgents and extremist elements. There is a dire need to address this narcotics problem. Short-term measures need to be complemented by comprehensive, durable and long-term solutions based on alternative livelihoods and development.

Fifthly, any strategy, no matter how innovative or dynamic it is, would be doomed to failure without the support of all elements of Afghan society. There is a dire need to launch an Afghan-led process of reconciliation based on dialogue. The renewal of the democratic mandate in the forthcoming elections in Afghanistan is an ideal opportunity to promote political and socio-economic inclusion and national reconciliation.

Sixthly, the parameters of a sustainable solution should include a comprehensive regional approach, taking into account the interests, the capacities and the aspirations of sovereign States and their people. It should build solid stakes for all sides in lasting peace. Given its strategic geographical setting, the region has a vast potential to be transformed into an international cooperation and development hub. We must move from confrontation and rivalry to competition and cooperation in order to harvest the latent benefits. Tapping this

potential would be a win-win proposition for all in the region and beyond.

The role of the United Nations is the cornerstone of the international efforts to help Afghanistan. We appreciate the constructive role played by UNAMA in Afghanistan. Given the formidable scope and gigantic task at hand, we believe that the Mission should be provided with the necessary resources to carry out its mandate.

Apart from Afghanistan itself, no other country has a more vital stake in the establishment of peace, security and prosperity in that country than Pakistan. Pakistan is the direct sufferer of ongoing instability in Afghanistan. Peace in Afghanistan is essential to the tranquillity and development of Pakistan's own border regions. Therefore, we are firmly committed to helping the Government of Afghanistan and the international partners in restoring security and bringing stability to Afghanistan. Pakistan has been host to the world's largest refugee population, with all its consequences. The security forces and the people of Pakistan continue to make tremendous sacrifices.

Pakistan attaches high priority to close, friendly and cooperative relations with Afghanistan and wants to have a broad-based, mutually beneficial relationship with its western neighbour. Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have improved tremendously with frequent contacts at the highest political levels and commitment on both sides to working together to address common problems and realizing our joint potential. The Third Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, held in Islamabad on 13 and 14 May, was a further demonstration of Pakistan's commitment to the stability and economic development of Afghanistan.

Let me highlight some of the words spoken by my Prime Minister at that meeting. Since his meeting in Colombo in 2008 with President Karzai, our two democratic Governments have jointly brought about a fundamental transformation in our bilateral relationship. Today our multi-track engagement is comprehensive, encompassing the political, economic, security and social spheres.

Pakistan has also been engaged in the capacity-building of Afghanistan's State institutions in the fields of diplomacy, law enforcement, judiciary, agriculture, counter-narcotics and medical services. Our participation is meant for the Afghan people, on projects identified by the Afghans and implemented through the Afghan authorities. A culturally nuanced, Afghan-led process of dialogue and reconciliation has to proceed in tandem with efforts to co-opt local populations. Pakistan welcomes the renewed focus on transregional development. The Prime Minister also announced specific measures at that forum, including 1,000 scholarships for Afghan students, setting up model villages for Afghan refugees when they return, and the establishment of vocational training centres.

Lately, Pakistan has been engaged in trilateral summits involving key players, from the United States to Turkey, Iran and Russia, and has participated in other international meetings on Afghanistan, which continues to demonstrate our commitment. We welcome the reinvigoration of the United States focus on the region to promote broad-based cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The meeting of the foreign ministers of three countries in February, followed by a trilateral summit in May, has greatly helped to define the future contours of a comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan.

Our participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in Moscow on 27 March further enhanced trilateral cooperation among the Russian Federation, Pakistan and Afghanistan. We welcome the readiness expressed by the Russian Federation to contribute to all positive initiatives. Similarly, our participation in the trilateral summit, very graciously hosted by our brother country Turkey in Ankara in April, constitutes a step forward in trilateral cooperation among our three nations in the field of security and intelligence-sharing, leading towards building greater trust among all sides. Equally important was the meeting in March in Tehran at which Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan established a trilateral mechanism. This was followed by a senior officials' meeting in April in Islamabad to strengthen further coordination.

Pakistan envisions a peaceful, stable, prosperous and thriving region and stands ready to play its part in that process. We reiterate our full support for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. We also call on the international community and the United Nations to remain steadfast in their commitment to Afghanistan.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Puri (India): Let me begin by offering you, Sir, my warmest good wishes on the completion of your tenure as Permanent Representative of Turkey,

and my congratulations on your completion of an outstanding career in public service. I wish you the very best and every success in your future endeavours. I also thank you, Sir, for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan. This is of immediate and abiding interest to India, a close neighbour and civilizational partner of Afghanistan.

India welcomes the positive perspective reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2009/323) and the briefing by Special Representative Eide regarding the three interlinked strategic shifts in Afghanistan.

For India, the litmus test of cost-effective investment in assistance programmes is to ensure that these are aligned closely with Afghan priorities and that they contribute to capacity-building. We endorse the Secretary-General's exhortation to the international community to maintain its broad and multinational presence. This is indeed the time not to reduce our efforts, but to enhance them in a coordinated manner. That has been our consistent position, even after the attack on our embassy in Kabul last July.

The Secretary-General's report is a clear riposte to the voices questioning the utility of our collective effort. In response, we must stand behind the civilian surge and the expansion of Afghan capacity, both in word and deed. That will require strongly supporting the priority areas identified by our Afghan partners, including agriculture, energy, private sector development and capacity-building. Useful decisions in that regard were taken at the eleventh meeting of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board. We must also support the financial and administrative expansion of the United Nations presence, undertaken at our collective exhortation.

At the same time, organizational difficulties and political debates notwithstanding, the second nationwide and presidential elections since 2001 should be more of a cause for satisfaction, as emphasized by my friend and colleague the Ambassador of Afghanistan. We recognize that there are calls to ensure that the elections are free and fair. Naturally, elections need a level playing field, but let us recognize that vibrant political debate is itself a hopeful sign. Energetic debates do not always imply the unravelling of the political process. We need also to be mindful that too much external advice often acts conversely and undermines domestic institutions.

From all these standpoints, the moment has come for us to more vocally recognize and support growing Afghan capacities. Too much time has been spent berating Afghan actors for various failings, instead of placing their efforts in the correct perspective. Establishing a modern Government after decades of war, displacement and privation was never going to be an easy task. We must no longer continue to miss the woods for the trees.

On the negative side, the security situation remains deeply worrying. It does not take much foresight to predict that the coming six months will be difficult, most of all for the Afghan people.

Asymmetric warfare and complex terrorist attacks are being mounted and the wellsprings that sustain such terror show no signs of being drained. We need to ponder deeply over how best that can be achieved. In that context, we continue to have reservations with regard to the language used in United Nations reports to describe terrorist attacks. Surely such operations are not being mounted by anti-Government elements or insurgents.

We welcome the progress recorded by the Afghan National Army, especially as the expansion of its capacity is the only viable guarantee of a successful conclusion to military engagement in Afghanistan. We note with appreciation the efforts being made by third countries to strengthen the capacities of the Afghan National Army.

That brings me to reconciliation. While that is often a corollary of military strategies, in Afghanistan it is a matter that requires great caution. Successive reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions here and in the General Assembly have underscored that it should be an Afghan-led process, within the parameters of the Constitution of the land. It has also be been reiterated that it must be pursued from a position of strength. We must consider whether we are at that juncture as yet.

Reconciliation requires strategic clarity, unity of purpose and due recognition of the nature of those with whom we seek to reconcile. Without consensus among the relevant parties over key issues — such as reconciliation, with whom and how — we may well be dividing ourselves, not those we seek to peel away from terrorist groups. It is for that reason that we must go beyond unworkable distinctions between good and bad Taliban. Equally, we have to be mindful that, in

pursuing those distinctions, we are projecting impressions of weakness, desperation or even a defeatist mentality.

I should like to reaffirm our unswerving commitment to helping our Afghan partners to the fullest extent of our capabilities. Stabilizing Afghanistan is not only integrally connected to our own security; it is also connected to the civilizational legacy of our friendship. That is why attacks upon our people and symbols of our friendship only serve to outrage us and redouble our commitment to Afghanistan.

Our commitment to Afghanistan has now exceeded $1.2 billion. It includes the widest range of activities, from a cold-storage plant in Kandahar to a power transmission line to Kabul. We are building the Parliament building while simultaneously targeting community-based local projects that provide quick peace dividends, such as schools and hospitals. In all of that, capacity-building is a core element. It is in support of that core task that India has expanded the current allocation of 1,000 seats in our institutions for capacity-building and scholarship programmes by 35 per cent.

Turning to the regional aspect, the stabilization of Afghanistan must be a central part of regional processes if the country is to regain its role as the crossroads of South, West and Central Asia. That includes regional economic processes, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which benefit the entire region. Hindering those processes affects Afghanistan as well as the region. We must expand rather than hinder trade, transit and transport ties, including overland transit and trade. That is the best way of bringing the regional dimension into play in a positive manner.

In conclusion, we note the Secretary-General's commitment to providing us with benchmarks of progress in his next report. That will be a good step, especially if they are results-based rather than timeline-based. We look forward to participating in the discussion about the benchmarks, with the full ownership of the Government of Afghanistan.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Italy.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Let me first congratulate Ambassador Baki İlkin and express my personal wishes and the congratulations of my authorities for the significant coincidence of Turkey's very successful presidency of the Security Council this month and the completion of his mission to the United Nations, which has been one of great achievements for Ambassador İlkin's career and for his country.

I wish to thank Ambassador Kai Eide, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his frank and always thought-provoking briefing. I would also like to thank Ambassador Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his important remarks, especially on the political perspective of his country, the development challenges that Afghanistan is facing and the need for a genuinely unified approach by the international community to its efforts in Afghanistan.

We fully share the assessment provided by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2009/323). The United Nations efforts remain essential to building Afghan ownership and capacity in the security, infrastructure, agriculture, governance and rule of law sectors. The deployment of additional international troops, whose importance we all understand against the background of security developments, should be accompanied by a resolute civilian surge. Enhancing the presence of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) at the provincial level will be equally critical to maximizing the benefits of our efforts.

Italy supports the Secretary-General's call for additional resources in the Mission's 2010 budget. My Government will also continue to promote Afghan empowerment at all levels, including those of institution-building, economic development and cultural dialogue. I would like to add that my country is deeply committed to Afghanistan's security. A further reinforcement of the Italian contingent has already been announced as part a strategy that must include all the necessary efforts to protect and ensure the safety of the civilian population.

The Secretary-General has underscored the link between peace and development in Afghanistan. He has urged us to move beyond the simple logic of conflict management. That was indeed the main message of the G-8 ministerial meeting on Afghanistan and the regional dimension, which took place in Trieste on

26 and 27 June. The meeting reiterated the need for a comprehensive approach. That was a concept that was endorsed by the G-8 foreign ministers and the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan in their joint statement, and echoed by the communiqué issued at the outreach sessions with neighbouring countries, major contributors and international actors.

Both documents emphasized the importance of building on a number of critical initiatives, including the tripartite talks initiated by Afghanistan and Pakistan with Iran, Russia, Turkey and the United States, and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, which in our view is an essential mechanism to spur socio-economic development in the country. They also reiterated the need for full support for UNAMA and their commitment to working with the Independent Election Commission, the United Nations and the International Security Assistance Force to ensure credible, inclusive and secure presidential elections.

The discussion on drug trafficking and border management underlined the limitations of past approaches. It shed new light on the potential of the draft regional programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and on the opportunities provided by a climate of mutual trust in the region through enhanced border cooperation, intelligence exchanges and joint actions between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the framework of the Dubai initiative.

A wide range of development programmes is needed to ensure the return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons. The Trieste meetings further emphasized the centrality of agriculture to Afghanistan's future. As the Council knows, refugee repatriation and food security are key components of the Afghan National Development Strategy.

What is needed now is more tangible aid, including support for such United Nations agencies as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme. Access to regional markets through new infrastructure, as well as greater integration and the availability of human capital, are all essential priorities, together with the education of young people and women and the promotion on the role of the media as drivers for social participation in public life, in particular in view of the upcoming presidential elections.

On that point, the Afghanistan-Pakistan international support group met in Trieste and spelled out the prerequisites for a credible electoral process, including fair play by all candidates, scrupulous respect for the principle of non-interference, and impartiality of the international community. Also stressed was the UNAMA coordination mandate and Ambassador Eide's crucial task in enhancing the coherence of the international presence.

Participants in the Trieste meeting focused on regional stabilization, with specific attention to the situation of internally displaced persons in Pakistan. Lack of security will become even more serious when the monsoon season will affect life in the camps and make it easier for the Taliban to exploit poverty and discontent among the internally displaced persons. All this calls for immediate action and for supporting the democratic Government in Islamabad in dealing with the current humanitarian emergency and the upcoming phase of reconstruction. The G-8 should meet again on this subject at the margins of the next General Assembly ministerial week in New York.

I add my remarks to the statement that was pronounced this morning by the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the presidency of the European Union.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Council's discussion of the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Afghanistan (S/2009/323). I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, on my Government's behalf, and to congratulate you on your leadership of this Council over the past month.

Australia appreciates the United Nations leadership of international civilian engagement in Afghanistan, and we would like to acknowledge again the tireless efforts of Special Representative Eide in that regard. As we have said before and will no doubt say again, international engagement in Afghanistan must address security, governance and regional cooperation. We all understand the importance of creating a secure environment in Afghanistan in which

development and economic opportunities can grow. That is why we are increasing our force levels by 40 per cent. Australia is also helping to build and strengthen the capability of the Afghan National Army in Uruzgan, and we will contribute $200 million to the Afghan National Army trust fund.

At the same time, we must not lose focus on developments in the civilian area. Afghan authorities and the international community must continue to work together to ensure that forthcoming elections are secure, credible and inclusive and that all candidates are able to compete on a level playing field.

Australia will provide supplementary support for the conduct of the elections, including short-term military support through the deployment of an infantry company for a period of eight months. We will also make a small financial contribution to support the conduct of elections and, of course, we will be dispatching a civilian observer team.

Last year, Australia pledged $250 million in development and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, bringing our total assistance to date to approximately $600 million. That is a fairly significant amount, given that Afghanistan falls outside our sphere of influence, but it underlines the importance of our bilateral relationship with Afghanistan and the importance that this issue has for the international community as a whole.

We have also provided funding to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. This Fund is working to strengthen the resilience of Afghan communities and expand economic opportunities and access to essential services, including by supporting the National Solidarity Programme. I am told that some 68 per cent of Afghanistan's rural population have benefited from this Programme, and we note that the World Bank considers the Programme to be one of the most successful in supporting rural and community development. We therefore encourage Member States to pledge additional funds to this worthy work.

Despite the deteriorating security conditions, progress has been made in Afghanistan. Average per capita gross domestic product in Afghanistan has almost doubled since 2002. The World Bank reports significant progress in public financial management, and that is something that has been reflected in the reports we have had from the Special Representative. There have also been impressive advances in increasing basic education, with a sixfold enrolment increase since 2001, of which 35 per cent are girls. But as Ambassador Eide has reminded us separately, we may now have 6 million small boys and girls in basic education, but small boys and girls grow up, and we need to be ready to support them as they move through the primary and tertiary periods of their education as well.

The international community must continue to unite to build on these successes. It is continued cooperation with Afghan authorities and with each other that will create the secure and prosperous future that Afghanistan deserves.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Germany.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): First of all, allow me on this, your very last day, to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your successful Security Council presidency. You have had a full agenda, and we will always remember this special presidency. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the Secretary-General for his report (S/2009/323) and Special Representative Kai Eide for today's briefing, which was passionate, honest and clear, as we are used to his being. In addition, I would like to thank in particular Ambassador Tanin for his realistic analysis and his wise counsel.

Germany fully supports the statement of the European Union presidency and shares the analysis presented on the situation in Afghanistan.

As an important contributor to civilian reconstruction and development programmes for Afghanistan and as a major troop contributor to the United Nations-mandated International Security Assistance Force operation, Germany would like to highlight the following aspects.

First, the electoral process in Afghanistan is a crucial step for consolidating democratic development in Afghanistan. The international community, in particular through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is successfully supporting the Independent Election Commission in preparing for these elections. We are confident that, for these first Afghan-led elections, our Afghan partners, first of all President Karzai and his Government, will work to ensure a stable process that leads the country all the way to credible, free and fair elections on 20 August.

Germany has continuously supported the UNDP Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow project by donating $10 million in 2008, and will provide an additional $12 million for this programme in 2009.

Security remains a critical concern, especially with regard to the election process. In this context, Germany has increased the number of its troops on the ground in order to assist in conducting free and fair elections in a safe and secure environment.

Secondly, Afghan ownership and good governance remain key to the success of the efforts of the international community in supporting development in Afghanistan. We encourage the Afghan Government to fight corruption and the trade and production of narcotic drugs with increased dedication. We also welcome the recent Government initiatives in the field of agriculture and private sector development and call upon the Afghan Government to follow through with them.

Thirdly, Germany will continue to support reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. 2009 has seen yet another increase in German contributions, up to approximately $250 million overall. We strongly believe that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) must continue to play the leading role in coordinating all civilian efforts of the international community, as agreed upon last summer in Paris.

In this respect, we strongly support the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board process as the core consulting mechanism. As a major contributor to the United Nations budget, we openly supported the considerable increase of the 2009 UNAMA budget, and we look forward to seeing tangible results. We believe that, in order for UNAMA to carry out its enhanced mandate, a further increase in its resources is warranted, as Kai Eide rightly pointed out this morning.

Against this background, Germany welcomes the increase in UNAMA personnel on the ground and the inauguration of two more UNAMA regional offices in Tirin Kot and Sari Pul. We express our support for UNAMA's efforts to open additional regional offices in Afghanistan. We are pleased to note that the increased presence of UNAMA in the regions has already started to add value, including in the areas of Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz and Faizabad.

Fourthly, we support the proposal brought forward by the Secretary-General to include a finalized set of benchmarks in a later report to the Council. We believe that those benchmarks could contribute to measuring progress in the implementation of UNAMA's mandate and priorities. At the same time, we ask that those benchmarks be considered as supporting reconstruction efforts that already exist, not as an end in themselves.

Let me conclude by thanking Kai Eide again for his tireless efforts and his successful leadership of UNAMA. Despite all the challenges ahead we have been able to help improve the living conditions in Afghanistan, to build schools for boys and girls, hospitals, bridges, streets, etc. This success has been possible only thanks to all the women and men from all over the world who are willing to serve in Afghanistan. Let me seize this opportunity to thank them all for their tireless efforts and their personal commitment.

We would like to thank all the teams working under the umbrella of UNAMA as well as the many non-governmental organizations and members of the diplomatic corps, and last but not least all the personnel of the security forces, for their efforts to improve the life of the Afghans.

Germany will live up to its international responsibilities and will continue to support the Afghan people.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin, Mr. President, by congratulating you on your skilful stewardship of the Security Council's work this month and by extending our gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and all their colleagues in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for their dedication to the consolidation of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Since you are to leave us soon, Mr. President, I join other colleagues in wishing you all the best and every success in your future endeavours. You are known for your friendship, professionalism and kindness. We will surely miss you a great deal.

I would like also to thank Mr. Kai Eide for his comprehensive briefing to the Council today and for his tireless efforts and sincere dedication to help coordinate international efforts in Afghanistan. Our

thanks also go to all the men and women in UNAMA for their praiseworthy endeavours in Afghanistan. I also extend our thanks to the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan for his impressive statement this morning and for his update on the situation.

As the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/323) clearly indicates, we are yet again facing a mixed picture of both achievements and causes for continued concern in Afghanistan. The report stresses that during the reporting period progress has continued to be made in such important areas as the expansion of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. The report also indicates that the agricultural sector and the private sector continue to blossom, while there has also been encouraging progress as far as overall development and capacity-building issues are concerned. Moreover, it is encouraging to learn through the report that donor coordination has improved, including through a more effective use of the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board.

The Afghan people and Government deserve our collective admiration for their steadfastness on the path they have chosen and for the remarkable achievements they have made in the past several years towards a stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Despite those positive developments, causes for concern remain in other areas. The security situation has continued to deteriorate and the number of security incidents and the level of violence have increased compared to the same period last year. The menaces of poppy cultivation and drug trafficking have continued to pose a serious threat to Afghanistan, the wider region and beyond.

We are of the view that, to address insecurity in Afghanistan, adequate attention should be given to the genuine needs and views of the Afghan people and Government. The "Afghanization" of security and reconstruction efforts and greater seriousness in paving the ground for home-grown security and full national ownership by Afghans over their country's issues are needed and are of paramount importance if we want to see real improvement in the situation in Afghanistan. The Afghans have made it clear that they will not accept the indefinite presence of foreign forces in their country. And the increase in the number of foreign forces there, if it is done based on past approaches, will not help to improve the security situation.

We concur with the report that capacity-building and the utilization of regional potential for the reconstruction of Afghanistan can contribute a great deal to the improvement of the situation in the country.

Afghanistan's constitution is of vital importance, since, among other things, it underpins the unity of Afghans from all walks of life and from all religious and ethnic backgrounds. We support the position of the Afghan Government that Afghan-led dialogue can be considered only with those groups that are committed to the constitution of the country, have not and will not act against the country's security and have not perpetrated terrorist acts. Any effort in that regard should also be without prejudice to relevant Security Council resolutions particularly resolution 1267 (1999).

The upcoming presidential and provincial council elections in Afghanistan will be among the most important political developments in the country this year. We are confident that Afghans will turn this opportunity into another milestone on their path towards stability and prosperity.

Regional and international initiatives and gatherings in the reporting period, particularly the Tehran trilateral summit of 24 May 2009, the Hague Conference on 31 March 2009 and such initiatives as the joint cooperation of Iran and Japan in Afghanistan, demonstrate the regional and international potentials and commitments in supporting Afghans in their journey towards peace, security and development. We must build upon these initiatives in our endeavours to help Afghans.

The cultivation and production of and the trafficking in narcotic drugs in Afghanistan pose another daunting challenge that not only adversely affects that country's economic reconstruction and undermines its stability and security, but also poses serious threats to the whole region and to the entire international community. Despite the presence of military forces from various countries in Afghanistan, the international community has not left a satisfactory record in fighting this threat in Afghanistan. This is a threat to all of us and therefore requires a collective, resolute and serious response in all its aspects.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been and continues to be unwavering in its war against heavily armed drug traffickers originating from Afghanistan, and we encourage others to join us in this important

fight in order to save present and future generations from the devastating impact of this calamity.

Afghanistan's security and stability are of vital importance for the Islamic Republic of Iran, as they are for the rest of the region and beyond. We have always been clear in our condemnation of all heinous terrorist acts committed by terrorist groups, particularly Al-Qaida and the Taliban, in Afghanistan, and also in our condemnation of attacks on civilians through air raids by foreign forces, and we have extended our full support to the efforts of the Afghan Government to improve the security and economic situation in the country.

We have displayed our sincere and serious desire to help our Afghan brothers and sisters through the concrete steps that we have taken in various reconstruction activities in Afghanistan, as I mentioned in my previous statement. As the Secretary-General and his Special Representative have stressed on various occasions, regional potentials should be more seriously explored in addressing the challenges that Afghanistan is facing.

The Islamic Republic of Iran not only has attended various international and regional gatherings on Afghanistan, but has also taken the initiative to host or propose several regional meetings in this regard, including the first trilateral summit of the Presidents of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, which was held in Tehran in May.

As the report of the Secretary-General mentions, a declaration was adopted at the end of the summit in Tehran, in which the three countries expressed their commitment to joining efforts to fight terrorism, support trilateral economic projects and counter the production and trafficking of narcotics.

I wish to conclude by stressing that we support the central role that the United Nations has played and continues to play, through UNAMA, in coordinating the international community's assistance to Afghanistan and in helping the Afghan people and Government tackle the challenges they have faced over the past several years. Under Afghan ownership and leadership, we should focus our attention on the four priority areas described in the Chairmen's Statement issued at the end of The Hague Conference in March this year: strengthened security, improved economic growth, good governance and enhanced regional cooperation. The journey towards a stable and prosperous Afghanistan may be long. It may also be difficult, but we are confident that the Government and people of Afghanistan will make it. They will succeed.

The President: The representative of Afghanistan has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I give him the floor.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I want to sincerely thank everyone who has spoken today for their support for Afghanistan, the Afghan people and the stabilization process. I have taken note of all the views, suggestions and concerns that have been presented today. The enduring partnership between the international community and Afghanistan is key to success in the country.

I am particularly grateful to you, Sir, for organizing this debate on your last day as President of the Council and at the United Nations. You have been a well-known and well-respected diplomat at the United Nations, and particularly in our region for your work there earlier in your career. In Afghanistan, you are known to be a distinguished diplomat of a country, Turkey, that has cordial relations with mine. In the name of the Afghan people, I would like to pay tribute to your work and your efforts on behalf of Afghanistan. We take note and will certainly remember that the convening of this debate was among your last official acts.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Kai Eide to respond to some of the comments that have been made.

Mr. Eide: I really asked for the floor in order to be the last person to whom you give the floor in any Security Council meeting. I have achieved that. I want to echo the best wishes that have been expressed by so many around the table, and I am honoured to be present at your last, Sir. I wish you all the best.

I have just two or three very brief comments. Some speakers have mentioned the need to look beyond the election period. I agree, and I touched upon that in my statement. I think it is important that we start thinking about it, because I believe that, with a new Government in place, whoever the new President may be, it will be important to have a vision to build on very soon that ensures continuity with our current situation. That is important.

The question of donor coordination has been raised again a number of times. It scares me sometimes

to hear of the kind of expectations some have, given our ability to do magic with limited resources. But I think that we will certainly have to do that in the future. Ambassador Rice and others noted that we need to get together at a much earlier stage when we formulate our aid programmes, and to think together much more before we carve our programmes in stone, so to speak. When we do not, it makes it much more difficult for us to be flexible afterwards. We will try to learn from what we have seen in the past.

We will open new offices and I do need more personnel, but I would like to urge all Council members and other colleagues who have participated in this meeting to see if they have personnel with the right qualities whom they could offer to us — not as gratis personnel, but to be recruited. It is not only a question of the number of personnel for me; it is a question of the quality of people and the expertise and resources that they represent. That is particularly true for the new offices to be established. We will undertake that as well as we possibly can.

Finally, the benchmark issue has been raised by many. I repeat that I take it very seriously, but it is interesting to see how many different versions there are around the table of what "benchmarks" means. I will conclude by saying that I will take all those ideas with me and be inspired by them. Hopefully, we will also come to our own conclusions so that the Security Council can receive a decent report in September — not you, Mr. President, but many others who will remain here. I thank them all for their kind words to me and my staff.

The President: I thank everyone for their kind and generous words to me.

There are no other speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.